

Remarks

Reconsideration and reexamination of the above-identified patent application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-8, 11-12, 15-21, and 24 are pending in this application. Of the pending claims, claims 1 and 15 are the only independent claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the final Office Action mailed November 22, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-8, 11-12, 15-21 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,005,084 issued to Skinner ("Skinner"). The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection and believes that the claimed invention is patentable over Skinner.

1. The Claimed Invention

The claimed invention, as recited in independent claims 1 and 15, is directed to a system and an associated method for automatically scanning channels of a television (TV) operable for displaying a plurality of channels of a channel lineup one at a time.

As recited in independent claim 1, the system includes a TV input device operable for being controlled respectively by viewers to enable the viewers to control the TV to change the channels being displayed by the TV. The TV input device enables each viewer to associate preference settings of the viewer with the TV input device. The preference settings for each viewer include channel display time period, channel scanning order, and program category filter preference settings. The TV input device in response to being controlled by a first one of the viewers is operable with the TV to automatically change the channels being displayed by the TV without any further viewer control of the TV input device such that each channel in the channel lineup having content satisfying the first viewer's program category filter preference setting is automatically displayed, in accordance with the

first viewer's channel scanning order preference setting, one at a time by the TV for the duration of the first viewer's channel display time period.

2. Skinner

The Examiner cited col. 6, lines 30-43 of Skinner for disclosing a remote control 200 which meets the limitations of independent claims 1 and 15 except for the channel display period and program category filter preference settings as claimed. The Examiner posited that channel display period and program category filter preference settings are well known. Consequently, the Examiner concluded that it would have been obvious to include these functions into the remote control 200 to perform the well known functions as claimed.

The cited col. 6 passage of Skinner discloses the use of "personal preference" rings. Skinner discloses that the personal preference rings are associated with different viewers and that the personal preference rings for each viewer include (i) a personal preference parameter ring and (ii) a personal preference channel ring (see col. 1, lines 23-37 of Skinner). The personal preference parameter ring is used to automatically control television parameters such as brightness, contrast, balance, etc. (see col. 1, lines 23-29 of Skinner). The personal preference channel ring is used to associated certain ones of the channels with a viewer.

Col. 1, lines 29-37 of Skinner defines a personal preference channel ring as follows:

A personal preference channel ring is also accommodated in the state of the art complex television system . . . with a preferred channel automatically accessed, and the pressing of a channel forward or scan button causing the tuner to tune to the next channel specified in the personal preference channel ring.

The Applicant believes that the relevance of Skinner is the disclosure of the ability to associate different personal preference channel rings with different viewers. Skinner discloses that a viewer uses a remote control to power-up the TV. Upon the TV being

powered up, the personal preference channel ring associated with the viewer is used to cause the TV to tune to “a desired (start-up) channel” (see col. 5, lines 24-39 of Skinner). The desired (start-up) channel is the “preferred channel” referenced in col. 1, lines 29-37 of Skinner as noted above. Upon the viewer pressing a channel-up or channel-down button on the remote control, the TV tunes “to the next channel (up or down) in the personal preference channel ring sequence” (see col. 5, lines 40-68 of Skinner).

As such, the Applicant submits that Skinner discloses that pressing a channel button a first time causes the TV to tune to from the preferred channel to a first channel of the personal preference channel ring sequence but that the channel button has to be pressed a second time to cause the TV to tune from the first channel to a second channel of the personal preference channel ring sequence. That is, Skinner discloses that the viewer has to press the channel button each time for the TV to tune through the channels of the personal preference channel ring sequence.

Consequently, although Skinner allows a subset of all the available channels to be contained in the personal preference channel ring of a viewer, Skinner suffers from the disadvantage noted on page 1, lines 25-28 in the Background Art section of the Applicant’s specification. Page 1, lines 25-28 of the Applicant’s specification recites, “A problem with this procedure is that the viewer must physically control the remote control or other standard TV input device to scan through the channels until a desired channel is located.”

3. The Claimed Invention Compared to Skinner

The claimed invention generally differs from Skinner in that in the claimed invention the TV input device in response to being controlled by a viewer automatically changes the channels being displayed by the TV without any further viewer control of the TV input device such that each channel in the channel lineup having content satisfying the viewer’s program category filter preference setting is automatically displayed, in accordance with the

viewer's channel scanning order preference setting, one at a time by the TV for the duration of the viewer's channel display time period.

Therefore, the Applicant believes that independent claims 1 and 15 are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Skinner. Claims 2-8, 11-12, 16-21, and 24 depend from one of independent claims 1 and 15 and include the limitations therein. Thus, the Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection to the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

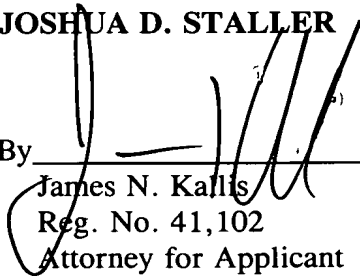
In summary, claims 1-8, 11-12, 15-21, and 24 meet the substantive requirements for patentability. The case is in appropriate condition for allowance. Accordingly, such action is respectfully requested.

If a telephone or video conference would expedite allowance or resolve any further questions, such a conference is invited at the convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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